

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, August 27, 1805, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE J. MSS. (JAMES MADISON.)

Monticello, Aug. 27, 05.

Dear Sir, —Yours of the 20th has been received, and in that a letter from Casinove, and another from Mrs. Ciracchi; but those from Turreau and to Yrujo were not enclosed. Probably the former was what came to me by the preceding post, respecting Moreau; if so, you have my opinion on it in my last. Considering the character of Bonaparte, I think it material at once to let him see that we are not one of the powers who will receive his orders.

I think you have misconceived the nature of the treaty I thought we should propose to England. I have no idea of committing ourselves immediately or independently of our further will to the war. The treaty should be provisional only, to come into force on the event of our being engaged in war with either France or Spain during the present war in Europe. In that event we should make common cause, & England should stipulate not to make peace without our obtaining the objects for which we go to war to wit, the acknowledgment by Spain of the rightful boundaries of Louisiana (which we should reduce to our minimum by a secret article) and 2, indemnification for spoliations, for which purpose we should be allowed to make reprisal on the Floridas & *retain them* as an indemnification. Our co-operation in the war (if we should actually enter into it) would be a sufficient consideration for Great Britain to engage for it's object; and it being generally known to France & Spain that we had entered into treaty with England, would probably ensure

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us a peaceable & immediate settlement of both points. But another motive much more powerful would indubitably induce England to go much further. Whatever ill-humor may at times have been expressed against us by individuals of that country, the first wish of every Englishman's heart is to see us once more fighting by their sides against France; nor could the king or his ministers do an act so popular as to enter into an alliance with us. The nation would not

weigh the consideration by grains & scruples. They would consider it as the price & pledge of an indissoluble course of friendship. I think it possible that for such a provisional treaty they would give us their general guarantee of Louisiana & the Floridas. At any rate we might try them. A failure would not make our situation worse. If such a one could be obtained we might await our own convenience for calling up the *casus fœderis*. I think it important that England should receive an overture as early as possible, as it might prevent her listening to terms of peace. If I recollect rightly, we had instructed Monroe, when he went to Paris, to settle the deposit; if he failed in that object to propose a treaty to England immediately. We could not be more engaged to secure the deposit then than we are the country now, after paying 15. millions for it. I do expect, therefore, that, considering the present state of things as analogous to that, & virtually within his instructions, he will very likely make the proposition to England. I write my thoughts freely, wishing the same from the other gentlemen, that seeing & considering the ground of each other's opinions we may come as soon as possible to a result. I propose to be in Washington on the 2d of October. By that time I hope we shall be ripe for some conclusion.

I have desired Mr. Barnes to pay my quota of expenses relating to the Marseilles cargo, whatever you will be so good as to notify him that it is. I wish I could have heard that Mrs. Madison's course of recovery were more speedy. I now fear we shall not see you but in Washington. Accept for her & yourself my affectionate salutations, & assurances of constant esteem & respect.